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Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 158: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN EL SALVADOR (A/45/242/Add.1, A/45/1021)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, at its 77th plenary meeting held on 10 June 1991, the General Assembly had decided to include in the agenda of its forty-fifth session, and to allocate to the Fifth Committee, an additional item 158 entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador" and had requested the Fifth Committee to reconvene to consider that item. Documentation for the item consisted of the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/242/Add.1) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/45/1021).

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee, said that the Security Council, by its resolution 693 (1991) of 20 May 1991, had established an Observer Mission to monitor and verify human rights in El Salvador. The Mission had been established for an initial period of 12 months. In his report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General had stated that once there was agreement on a cease-fire, ONUSAL would play a broader peace-keeping role in the region (A/45/242/Add.1, para. 18). Subsequently, the structure of the Mission would be revised and the Secretary-General would submit revised resource requirements to the General Assembly. In the meantime, the Secretary-General had submitted cost estimates for the Mission for 12 months totalling some $31.2 million gross (some $28.8 million net). The Advisory Committee had considered the estimates in detail and its recommendation was the result of a careful examination of the Secretary-General's assumptions in estimating the costs of the Mission.

3. Paragraphs 8 to 17 of the Advisory Committee's report contained observations on the main items of expenditure. For the reasons stated in those paragraphs, the Advisory Committee had concluded that lower expenditures than those estimated by the Secretary-General would be required for personnel costs such as salaries, allowances, mission subsistence allowance and daily subsistence allowance. Savings were also possible in the estimates for transport and communications equipment, the procurement of vehicles and, possibly, accommodation. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee was of the view that $23 million gross should be sufficient for the operation of the Mission from 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992. On that basis, the Advisory Committee was recommending that the General Assembly should appropriate and assess a total of $13.8 million gross ($13 million net) for the period from 1 July to 31 December 1991. The Committee was further recommending that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General, with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee, to enter into commitments not exceeding $9.2 million gross ($8.8 million net) for the remaining six-month period of ONUSAL from 1 January to 30 June 1992. Should the Secretariat encounter any difficulties

in operating the Mission within the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General was requested to report in the usual manner to the Advisory Committee.

4. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), referring to paragraph 12 of the Advisory Committee's report, requested clarification of the status of international staff seconded from Member States. The original budget proposal did not provide for the payment of base salary and/or mission subsistence allowance to such outside staff, but rather a consultancy fee on an international contract basis. He would also appreciate details of the savings anticipated as a result of recruiting non-staff members. His delegation was concerned about human rights observers being seconded from Member States on a voluntary basis and assuming a sensitive task that the United Nations might be better qualified to perform.

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the information contained in paragraph 12 had been provided by representatives of the Secretary-General. Staff recruited from outside the United Nations system would not be entitled to payments such as post adjustment, but would receive emoluments comparable to those they might receive from any other employer for comparable work. Applying different rates of pay to outside personnel would result in savings in personnel costs. United Nations personnel, on the other hand, would continue to receive salary and post adjustment, since they would be considered to be on short-term assignment. The representative of the Secretariat might be able to provide further details.

6. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), referring to paragraph 18 of the Advisory Committee's report, requested clarification regarding the financing of the second phase of the Mission. It seemed that a precise amount was not being recommended but, rather, was being left to the discretion of the General Assembly. In addition to the specific figure given for communications equipment in paragraph 16, his delegation would like to see a breakdown of estimated savings among the various items of expenditure mentioned in paragraphs 10 to 15.

7. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) requested clarification of the phrase "with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee" in paragraph 18, which seemed tantamount to a reversal of roles between the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. If the Advisory Committee authorized the General Assembly to take action, it would no longer be serving in an advisory capacity.

8. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) stressed that the Advisory Committee could never be considered a power unto itself; it was an advisor to the General Assembly and reported to the Fifth Committee. He was grateful for an opportunity to clarify certain aspects of paragraph 18. That paragraph had been drafted in

(Mr. Mselle)

the light of paragraph 16 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/242/Add.1), which contained a technical flaw. The Secretary-General had stated in subparagraph (a) of paragraph 16 that the General Assembly would appropriate funds for the Mission for 12 months; in subparagraph (b), that the General Assembly would apportion an initial amount of the total appropriation among Member States; and in subparagraph (c) that the Assembly would apportion the balance subject to the concurrence of the Advisory Committee. Ordinarily, appropriation and assessment by the General Assembly were final. The Advisory Committee had therefore decided to recommend that in order to implement the Secretary-General's recommendation, the General Assembly should authorize the Advisory Committee to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the remaining six months. That procedure had been adopted for other peace-keeping missions.

9. Replying to the Moroccan representative, he said that the overall adjustment recommended by the Advisory Committee had not been apportioned among the various items of expenditure, in the interest of allowing the Secretary-General the flexibility to transfer funds between items.

10. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), referring to the proposed staffing table of ONUSAL in annex III of the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/242/Add.1), asked why the entire staff must be at the P-3 level or above. He wondered why certain duties could not be assigned to staff members at the P-2 level.

11. Mr. FORAN (Officer-in-Charge, Department of Administration and Management) said that experienced staff were required on mission, which ruled out the entry-level grades. Staff members who had transferred from the General Service category to the Professional category were an exception, but they were likely to have considerable seniority, which meant that their P-2 salaries would be comparable to the P-3 level. For budgetary purposes, it was therefore prudent to make provisions for P-3 staffing.

12. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) requested details from the representatives of the Secretariat concerning the outside personnel referred to in paragraph 12 of the Advisory Committee's report. Specifically, he wished to know how they would figure in the staffing table and how they would be remunerated.

13. Mr. SADRY (Director, Field Operations Division, Office of General Services) specified that two types of contracts were involved. One was for personnel already employed by the United Nations and temporarily assigned to the field. They would continue to be entitled to post adjustment and, in addition, would receive a mission subsistence allowance in El Salvador. The other type of contract covered personnel recruited specifically for the Mission. They were not entitled to post adjustment, but would receive a base salary plus the amount of mission subsistence allowance applicable in

(Mr. Sadry)

El Salvador. Thus far, there had been no indication that any personnel had been assigned by Governments on a voluntary basis.

14. The CHAIRMAN requested Ms. Mustonen (Finland), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, to coordinate the text of a draft resolution.

15. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland) said that it would be possible to draft the text of a resolution without holding informal consultations.

16. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), referring to the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council (S/22494/Add.1) and to instructions received from the Secretary-General earlier that day, asked why the traditional scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations would be applied. Was that because the initial human rights mission to El Salvador would play a broader peace-keeping role in the future, as Mr. Mselle had indicated in his introduction to the report of the Advisory Committee?

17. Mr. FORAN (Officer-in-Charge, Department of Administration and Management) said that, traditionally, United Nations activities which were not financed under the regular budget were financed by assessments. The scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations had also been applied in the case of Namibia.

18. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) added that paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 693 (1991) referred to ONUSAL as "an integrated peace-keeping operation".

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.